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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING



KEITH CREAGH
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: July 13, 2015
RESUBMITTED: August 17, 2015

<u>A P P R O V E D</u> _____, 20____ MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION _____ (ASSISTANT TO THE COMMISSION)
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MEMORANDUM TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Subject: Cornish State Game Area; Designation and Additional Rules
Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 10 of 2015

Authority:

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, authorizes the Director and the Commission to issue orders to manage wild animals in this state.

Discussion and Background:

Recently, the state of Michigan purchased about 385 acres of property located in sections 21, 22, and 28, T4S R13W, Van Buren County, establishing the Cornish State Game Area (SGA). It was purchased with funds from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. As noted in the Wildlife Division Strategic Plan, acquisition of these lands will further propel the strategic purpose to provide access to lands for wildlife recreation.

The Department manages public lands to provide for quality outdoor public recreation opportunities, protect natural and cultural resources, and foster regional economic prosperity. State game areas are managed for all of these purposes utilizing an ecosystem approach that is sustainable, diverse and adaptive. Likewise, SGAs provide not only excellent habitat and hunting; they are also used for wildlife-based recreation.

The Cornish SGA is located in the southwest portion of the Lower Peninsula and is adjacent to the Kinney Waterfowl Production Area (WPA). The Kinney WPA is jointly managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Department to preserve wetlands and grassland for waterfowl and other wildlife. Although hunting is allowed within the Kinney WPA, only non-toxic shot may be used in order to protect the waterfowl nesting and brooding habitat from lead-related hazards. Due to the proximity of the Cornish SGA to the Kinney WPA, the Department recommends non-toxic shot restrictions for the Cornish SGA as well, except when using single projectile loads.

Pros and Cons

Many non-toxic alternatives to lead shot have been developed, are widely available, and perform similarly to lead bullets. The use of non-toxic shot benefits waterfowl that may otherwise ingest toxic materials and also reduces lead contamination of game meat.

Non-toxic shot is more expensive than lead shot. Some hunters may give negative feedback about the additional costs associated with hunting at the Cornish SGA. However, hunters who frequent the nearby Kinney WPA will already be using non-toxic shot in compliance with existing regulations.

Neighboring States

Michigan, as well as all of the states in the U.S., requires the use of non-toxic shot for waterfowl hunting. In addition, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Missouri, Ohio, Oregon, and Tennessee have additional non-toxic shot restrictions for some or all wildlife management areas.

Biological

Department-managed lands provide natural benefits to the surrounding area such as air pollution removal, water quality protection, wildlife habitat, and storm water management. The Department intends to manage the Cornish SGA for grassland and wetland management for waterfowl and grassland and agricultural management for waterfowl nesting and pheasants while continuing to collaboratively manage the Kinney WPA.

The proposed non-toxic shot restrictions are expected to benefit area waterfowl and help to keep contaminants out of the Kinney WPA. Lead poisoning has been recognized as a cause of death for waterfowl since the late 1800s. Lead poisoning cases today are usually the result of the bird eating bullet fragments, spent lead shot, or fishing sinkers and jig heads during normal feeding activities. When the lead reaches the acidic environment of the gizzard – found in waterfowl such as loons, ducks, geese and swans – or the ventriculus – found in birds of prey such as eagles – it is worn down, dissolved, and absorbed into body tissues. Once the lead reaches toxic levels in the tissues, muscle paralysis and associated complications result in death.

Social

The Department received letters of support from State Representative Aric Nesbitt, 66th District, and Senator Tonya Schuitmaker, 20th District, regarding the acquisition of the Cornish SGA. The letter particularly noted the Department's crucial role in protecting Michigan's wetlands and wildlife. Ducks Unlimited also formally supported the acquisition of the Cornish SGA and contiguous management with the Kinney WPA. Pheasants Forever, including the Allegan County Chapter, supported the acquisition of the Cornish SGA as well.

Economic

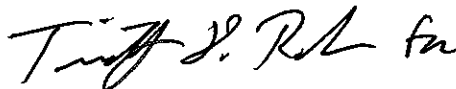
A 2012 Trust for Public Lands economic impact study of public lands in the State of New York found that every \$1 invested in securing public ownership of lands provided \$7 in economic value in natural goods and services. A similar return is expected from Department-managed public lands.

Recommendation:

This order was submitted for information on August 13, 2015, at the Natural Resources Commission Meeting. This item appeared on the Department's July 2015 calendar and may be eligible for approval on September 10, 2015.



Russ Mason, Ph.D., Chief
Wildlife Division



Gary Hagler, Chief
Law Enforcement Division



for Bill O'Neill, Chief
Forest Resources Division



Ronald A. Olson, Chief
Parks and Recreation Division



James Dexter, Chief
Fisheries Division



William E. Moritz, Ph.D.
Natural Resources Deputy

I have analyzed and discussed these recommendations with staff and concur as to matters over which the Director has authority.

Keith Creagh, Director

Date

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER

Amendment No. 10 of 2015

By authority conferred on the Natural Resources Commission and the Director of the Department of Natural Resources by sections 504, 40107 and 40113a of 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.504, 324.40107 and 324.40113a, it is ordered that effective September 11, 2015, the following section(s) of the Wildlife Conservation Order shall read as follows:

13.1 Managed state game areas and wildlife areas listed.

Sec. 13.1 The managed state game areas and wildlife areas are the Allegan state game area (Highbanks unit, Fennville farm, Ottawa marsh, and Bravo unit) - Allegan county; Cornish state game area - Van Buren county; Crow island state game area (east and west units) - Saginaw and Bay counties; Fish point wildlife area - Tuscola county; Grand Haven state game area - Ottawa county; Lapeer state game area - Lapeer county; Maple river state game area (wetlands wildlife management units near highway US-27) - Gratiot county; Munuscong wildlife area - Chippewa county; Muskegon state game area - Muskegon and Newaygo counties; Nayanquing point wildlife area - Bay county; Pointe Mouillee state game area - Wayne and Monroe counties; Portage marsh - Delta county; Sharonville state game area (Pierce road unit) - Jackson county; Shiawassee river state game area - Saginaw county; St. Clair flats wildlife area (Harsens island unit, Dickinson island unit and St. John's marsh unit) - St. Clair county; Sturgeon river sloughs wildlife area and Baraga plains wildlife area - Houghton and Baraga counties; and Wigwam bay wildlife area (east unit), Arenac county.

13.18 Cornish state game area; additional rule.

Sec. 13.18 Within the Cornish state game area located in sections 21, 22, and 28, T4S R13W, Van Buren county, it is unlawful to use or possess any shot, whether loose or loaded in shot shells, of a material other than those specified in section 3.411, except single projectile loads.

Issued on this 10th day of September, 2015.

Approved as to matters over which the Natural Resources Commission has authority.

John Matonich, Chairman
Natural Resources Commission

Approved as to matters over which the Director has authority.

Keith Creagh
Director